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THE SCRIBE OF THE CHAUCER MS CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY Gg 4. 27

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MARCH, 1938

By
ROBERT A. CALDWELL

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THE SCRIBE OF THE CHAUCER MS, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY Gg 4. 27

By Robert A. Caldwell

In their description of the Cambridge University Library Manuscript Gg 4. 27, Professors Manly and Rickert suggested that "The explanation of . . . [the scribe's] eccentricities may possibly lie in the hypothesis that he was a foreigner, perhaps a Fleming or a Dutchman."[1] They were prevented by limitations of space, however, from giving more than a summary statement of the evidence suggesting such a hypothesis; so a fuller discussion of what has long been a neglected problem of Chaucer scholarship is perhaps desirable.[2]

I

The Gg scribe was a competent penman. The frequency with which he corrected himself indicates that he was "unusually careful"; his familiarity "with the common abbreviations of Latin words" shows that he was not ignorant; and he would clearly seem to have proof-read his work.[3] On the other hand, the irregularity of his orthography, which is frequently grotesque, and the outright stupidity of many of his far too numerous errors seem incompatible with competence and care.

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[1] John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts* (Chicago, 1940), I, 178.

In my study of Gg, which was undertaken at Miss Rickert's suggestion, I have used the rotograph of folios 5-126, Library of Congress, Modern Language Association Deposit, No. 307, and the photostats of folios 132-516 in the Frederick Ives Carpenter collection at the University of Chicago. The preparation of this article has been greatly facilitated by microfilms of both provided by a grant from the Research Fund of the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Arkansas. My indebtedness to Mr. Manly and Miss Rickert is one the nature and extent of which can be fully appreciated only by those who have had the privilege of working with them.

[2] The peculiarities of the MS have been listed most fully by F. J. Furnivall, *A Temporary Preface to the Six-Text Edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales,* "Chaucer Society Publications," Second series, 3 (London, 1868), pp. 6-7, 51-59. For full bibliography, see Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual* (New York, 1908); John Edwin Wells, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400,* and *Supplements* (New Haven, 1916-); Dudley David Griffith, *A Bibliography of Chaucer, 1908-1924,* University of Washington Publications in Language and Literature, IV (Seattle, 1926); F. N. Robinson, ed., *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* Student's Cambridge edition (Boston, 1933).

[3] See Manly and Rickert, *Text,* I, 173-74, 177-78.

Parallels to the vagaries of spelling in Gg can be found in other English texts from the first half of the fifteenth century, notably certain of the *Paston Letters* and various pieces from the East Anglian area. But Gg does not show the "consistency on a few points and . . . marked tendency toward it on others" found in the spelling of the best scribes,[4] and scholars have not been undisturbed by its orthography, even though that orthography can perhaps be explained by contemporary East Anglian phonology.[5] When orthography is disposed of, other phenomena, certainly not dialectal, remain.

Many errors in Gg indicate that the scribe was uncertain of what he was doing, that he often failed to understand what he was writing, and that he was perhaps not thoroughly familiar with the English language. Frequently the errors can best be explained by the assumption that the scribe had difficulty with syntax and idiom,[6] as when he interchanges *that* and *as, that* and *than,*[7] and seems utterly confused by constructions involving a dative pronoun.[8] More numerous and more convincing than these errors involving syntax and idiom are those in which the scribe seems to have misunderstood or failed to recognize a word, or even an entire passage, which should have given him no trouble and which did not give trouble to the scribes of other manuscripts;[9] e.g., *beggestere*] *bakystere,*

[4] Manly and Rickert, *Text,* I, p. 559; and cf. p. 558. There is no reason that I know of for believing the *Paston Letters* the work of good scribes. So far as one can judge without recourse to the manuscripts, many of them—and those the ones offering most similarities to the orthography of Gg—would seem to be the work of semi-literate writers.

[5] The whole question of orthography and dialect is discussed at length in my unpublished University of Chicago dissertation, *Linguistic Peculiarities of the Cambridge University Library Manuscript Gg 4.27* (1938), pp. 15-64, from the third chapter of which the present study is condensed.

[6] E.g., TC 1. 682, A 216, A 594, A 745, A 1320, A 1601, A 1834, A 2083, A 2529, A 2918, A 3353, A 3491, B 465, B 566, B 850, B 1136, B 3461, D 881, F 518, F 1193, I 1078, LGW 10.

Space permits only a sampling of the evidence and a summary statement, supported by line references alone, of the conclusions I have drawn from it here. It is given in greater detail and with full discussion in my dissertation (see above, n. 5). Except as otherwise noted, citations of errors from CT, most of them unique, can be verified by reference to Manly and Rickert, *Text,* V-VIII, "Corpus of variants," in which can be found, albeit laboriously, more examples. I have not collated the Chaucer Society print of Gg and do not know how dependable it is for checking my references to other poems than CT.

[7] A 1864, A 4258, F 1152, F 1262, F 1504, G 918; A 3540, A 3800, A 4249, B 468, B 573, D 171, D 1836, F 1320, G 1170.

[8] A 1790, A 4139, B 2390, B 2570, E 664, F 1210; ethical or reflexive: A 4215, B 2236, B 2734, E 1779, G 1442.

[9] Cf. TC 4. 321, A 447, A 1929, A 2602, A 2953, A 3096, B 296, B 743, B 1838, B 3145, D 767, E 465, E 1039, E 1514, E 1800, E 1802, E 2063, I 472, I 1012. Entire passages: A 1038, A 2088, B 754, A 2750, A 2751, A 2754, B 511, B 1364, F 1111.

A 242; *lazars*] *men,* A 245; *swyue*] *schryue,* A 4178; *swyneshed*] *sweuenyst,* A 4262. Many errors result in such complete nonsense that, even though they may be explained paleographically, it is difficult to believe that a careful scribe would have allowed them to stand had he fully understood what he was writing;[10] e. g., *To wasshe*] *þe whiche,* ABC 178; *yonge*] *þong,* Scogan 20; *an herdesse*] *& hierdesse,* TC 1. 653; *beuere*] *bemysch,* A 272; *out of*] *vpon,* B 671; *Essex*] *exces,* D 218. In some cases, indeed, the result of error is not so much nonsense as out-and-out gibberish;[11] e.g., *diluge*] *deluuye,* Scogan 14; *volturis*] *wulturnus,* TC 1. 788; *ruby*] *rebe,* TC 2. 585; *haunteth*] *hancory,* TC 5. 1556; *hyndreste*] *hemereste,* A 622; *she*] *sen,* A 1807; *emperesse*] *Enaparensse* (vt. not recorded), F 1048; *blosmy*] *blospemy,* PF 183; *for-wrynkked*] *sowounkelid* (cor. to *sowrynkelid* by a later [?] hand), TG 84; *hindred*] *hemerede,* TG 244. Finally, it may be added that although most of the corrections are of minor miswritings, consisting merely of the insertion of an omitted character, there are others which indicate that the corrector, sometimes the scribe himself, thought the forms used to be erroneous.[12] In some cases the correction

[10] Cf. TC 1. 182, TC 2. 243, TC 3. 682, TC 3. 1025, TC 4. 736, TC 5. 805, A 425, A 982, A 1806, A 1924, A 2237, A 2370, A 3529, A 4051, B 1339, B 1360, B 1526, B 1820, B 3229, B 4505, D 622, D 1124, D 1158, E 1199, E 1272, E 1325, E 1614, E 1801, F 890, F 983, G 186, G 298, G 1476, H 55, I 337, I 340, I 359, I 384, I 733, I 939, I 1039, LGW 1213, TG (Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*) 395, TG 640. Perhaps also A 1243, B 2237, B 2984.

Most striking is the confusion of personal pronouns: TC 5. 874, A 78, A 1379, A 1765, A 1937, A 2082, A 3245, A 3414, A 3729, A 3755, A 4081, B 346, B 465, B 466, B 606, B 731, B 997, B 1923, B 3374, B 3542, D 1574, E 1779, F 545, F 575, F 1440, I 948, LGW 642, LGW 1000, LGW 1189, LGW 1563, LGW 2345 (examples from LGW noted by Koch, *Anglia,* XLIII [1919], 232-33).

[11] Cf. Scogan 48, Truth 7, TC 1. 628, TC 1. 704, TC 2. 821, TC 3. 1248, TC 3. 1307, TC 4. 1566, TC 5. 674, TC 5. 1520, TC 5. 1613, A 38, A 340, A 2938 (MS: *enseng;* vt. not recorded), A 3337, A 3616 (MS: *Noyous;* vt. not recorded), A 4171, B 199 (MS: *Ielius;* vt. not recorded), B 2042, C 654, C 656 (MS: *buche;* vt. not recorded), E 270, G 657 (MS: *subarblis;* vt. not recorded), I 943, I 1005, LGW 1737, TG 818.

Many examples of misdivision of words (not all such variants are recorded by Manly and Rickert, *Text,* V-VIII), in part to be attributed to auditory imagery, are probably to be considered in the same category. Two or more words written as one: TC 2. 816, TC 4. 401, TC 5. 1176, A 110, A 169, A 317, A 319, A 410, A 691, A 1017, A 1111, A 1174, A 1209, A 1578, A 4175, B 1917, B 2769, B 2927, D 605, D 785, E 566, E 570, E 1717, E 2059, F 785, F 1386, TG 119, TG 699. One word written as two or more: ABC 174, Scogan 16, TC 1. 161, TC 2. 1551, TC 3. 351, TC 3. 890, TC 3. 1450, TC 4. 140, TC 4. 804, TC 5. 109, TC 5. 1434, A 215, A 302, A 602, A 2185, A 2414, A 2725, A 2774, A 2864, A 2939, A 3121, B 2835, D 1914, E 1455, I 309, I 598, LGW 507, LGW 1490, TG 283, TG 505. Cf. *for t'arede it al to leene*] *forto arede al til eue,* TC 2. 132, and *Bytrent*] *Ben trent,* TC 4. 870.

[12] E.g. (minor spelling corrections not recorded by Manly and Rickert, *Text,* V-VIII), TC 1. 98, TC 1. 166, TC 1. 849, TC 2. 120, TC 2. 1687, TC 3. 659, TC 4. 351, A 407, A 502, A 701, A 756, A 990, A 1086, A 2677, A 2832, B 2192, B 2233, B 3373, D 1833, D 2043, E 232, E 592, E 678, E 1938, E 1944, G 802, LGW 1210.

introduced an error, and many of the miswritings and other errors have not been touched.

Nothing done by a careless or ignorant scribe is matter for surprise; but in the case of a manuscript as carefully executed as Gg, by a scribe who was obviously experienced, it is reasonable to suppose that the scribe gave to the meaning of what he was writing the attention of which he was capable, and that his errors, beyond the simpler ones of transcription, should make at least a semblance of sense. It is in the light of these considerations that the manuscript presents a special problem.

II

A possible, and perhaps the simplest, explanation of Gg would be that the scribe was a foreigner.[13] If he were a foreigner, it seems reasonable to suppose that he would have left some trace of his own language, the occasional substitution of a foreign word or form, just as a scribe speaking a dialect different from that of the text he was copying sometimes introduced the forms of his own speech. There are some words and forms in Gg which seem to indicate that the speech habits of the scribe were those of a Fleming or a Dutchman.[14]

The use of *sch* instead of *sc* or *sk* in such words as *Aschauns,* TC 1. 292; *schorne,* TC 1. 335; *scharmus* for *scarmuch,* TC 2. 611;

[13] See above, p. 33. As much seems to be implied by Miss Hammond's reference to "un-English miswritings" (*Manual,* p. 191). Skeat's statement, "the spelling of C. [Gg] can be completely accounted for, if we are careful to *add* the fact of its containing Anglo-French spellings to the other facts which concern the dialect only" ("The Influence of Anglo-French Pronunciation upon Modern English," *Transactions of the Philological Society, 1899-1902* [London, n.d.], p. 441) is ambiguous in its context; he does not say that the scribe was French or Norman, but neither does he say that the MS merely reflects an orthographic system uninfluenced by the speech habits of the scribe. Aside from the chronological difficulties involved in explaining phenomena in a fifteenth-century MS by criteria drawn from the thirteenth century, Skeat, by applying certain of his "Canons" (2, 4, 9, 14, 15) to the peculiarities listed by Furnivall (*Temporary Preface,* pp. 51-59), explains both too much and too little in Gg. He attributes to Anglo-French influence the confusion of *w* and *wh,* the uncertainty about the combination *ght,* and the confusion of *th* and *t.* The first two resulted in the fifteenth century from widespread phonological changes, and the third occurs, for example, in the *Paston Letters.* Skeat fails to account for the use of *sch* for [sk], the great uncertainty about the use of *e* and *i,* and the occasional similarities to Dutch words (see below, *passim*). For criticism of Skeat's paper in general, see Adolf Luhmann, *Die Überlieferung von Lazamon's Brut* ("Studien zur englischen Philologie," hrsg. Lorenz Morsbach, XXII [Halle A. Salle, 1906]), pp. 22 ff.

[14] Miss Margaret Rickert has suggested that the illustrations in Gg show some technical resemblance to the miniatures found in North Dutch manuscripts of about the same date, 1420-1440 (Manly and Rickert, *Text,* I, 602-4).

eschape, TC 3. 1242; *schape,* TC 4. 207; *schapyn,* TC 5. 908; *scharmoth,* TC 5. 1508; *schole,* A 125; *scholer,* A 260; *eschapith,* B 2020; *schorge,* B 3590, is a peculiarity which occurs so infrequently in other Chaucer manuscripts as to command attention. It is, however, common in Dutch:[15] for example, *schermuts* "skirmish," *schade* "injury," *school, schede* "sheath." The forms *bosch,* A 1527, and *boschis,* A 1579, may be compared to MDu *bosch;* and perhaps *chauce* for *cause,* A 1764, is to be explained by the fact that *ch* was used for *k* in some combinations in Dutch.

The intrusive vowel so common between a liquid and another consonant in Gg, not unparalleled in other English texts, is a normal development in Dutch.[16] The tendency toward the development of such a vowel in Gg is illustrated by *merciabele,* ABC 182; *pepele,* TC 1. 73; *resonabele,* TC 2. 1135; *conabele* (or *couabele*) for *covenable,* TC 2. 1137; *vn stabele,* TC 3. 820; *mouabele,* TC 3. 822; *onstabele,* TC 3. 1751; *discordabele,* TC 3. 1753; *verykele* for *vernycle,* A 685; *obstakeł,* A 1787; *Cerkelys,* A 2131; *tryakele,* B 479. Other forms occurring in Gg have nearly exact counterparts in Dutch: *Nobele,* ABC 97, ABC 153, MDu *nobel; abele,* ABC 184, MDu *abel; merakele,* B 477, MDu *mirakele; parabele,* D 679, MDu *parabel(e); spectakele,* D 1203, Du *spektakel.*

There are a few cases in which what may be a Dutch word has been substituted for the English. The correct reading of TC 1. 297 is *That in his hertes botme gan to stiken;* Gg has *nekyn*[17] for *stiken;* there is a MDu verb *naken, neken* "attingere." The form *boxtere* for *box tree,* A 1302, is an isolated example in Gg, but it is interesting to note that there was in Middle Dutch a combining form

[15] Dutch cognates of English words are given in *NED.* I have also drawn Dutch words and forms from L. -L. De Bo, *Westvlaamsch idioticon,* heruitgegeven door Joseph Samyn (Gent, 1892); L. W. Schuermans, *Algemeen Vlaamsch idioticon* (Leuven, 1865-70); *Bijvoegsel aan het algemeen Vlaamsch idioticon uitgegeven in 1865-1870* (Loven, 1883); Is. Teirlinck, *Zuid-oost Vlaandersch idioticon* ("Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor Taal- & Letterkunde," 3 vols. [Gent, 1908-22]); J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch handwoordenboek* ('s-Gravenhage, 1932); E. Verwijs, J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek,* 10 vols. ('s-Gravenhage, 1885-1925); M. de Vries, L. A. te Winkel, *et al., Woordenboek der nederlandsche taal,* I- ('s-Gravenhage, 1882-). My statements as to Dutch grammar, especially phonology and morphology, are based on Johannes Franck, *Mittelniederländische Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1910), and on the grammatical introduction to *Beatrijs,* ed. A. J. Barnouw ("Publications of the Philological Society," III [London, 1914]). I am indebted to Professor Margaret Schlauch for calling my attention to Barnouw's introduction.

[16] It is, incidentally, very noticeable in the English of one of my colleagues, a native Hollander.

[17] Over a caret before the first *n* and above the line is what looks like a question mark. This *nekyn* might, of course, be a misreading of long *-s* in ligature with *t,* but familiarity with *neken* would have contributed to the misreading.

-tere. For the puzzling *Iakke of Douer,* A 4347, Gg has *rakke of Douere;* to *rakke* may be compared MDu *rak* meaning, among other things, "a roast of fowls." In A 4309, *hastede* is substituted for the Nth *greithen* in a unique variant; Middle Dutch has the verb *hasten,* but apparently nothing to correspond to *greithen.* For *tarye,* D 1603, Gg has *lette,* which spoils the rime with *Marie;* there seems to be no Dutch word corresponding to *tarye,* but the intransitive *lette* has the meaning "to loiter, be slow." The substitution of *begynne* for *gonne,* G 1192, might be accounted for by the fact that Dutch apparently does not have the aphetic form necessary to the meter. In G 411, *fightyn* for *fecchen* might be attributed to confusion with Du *vechten* "to fight." Gg has *sperys* for *shaftes,* A 2605; there is a MDu *spere,* and *schacht,* the Dutch cognate of *shaft,* might not have been recognized as such. To *toparted* for *departed,* A 1621, may be compared MDu *toeparten.* The commission of the ear-error *ensome* for *and some,* E 1614, might have been facilitated by MDu *ende,* Du *en.* Familiarity with MDu *endelinge* "right down upon" might have had something to do with producing *endelyng* for *endelong,* F 992. To account for *spere* instead of *sparre,* A 990, a ME *sperr* is recorded in *NED,* but the regular Middle Dutch form seems also to have been *sperr(e).* It should be noted, too, that the usual form of the negative prefix in Gg, *on-,* which is also found in the *Paston Letters,* is the usual form in Dutch.

Probably the most striking single characteristic of the orthography of Gg is the variation in the use of *e* and *i* in both open and closed syllables. An *i* or *y* is written for original *e,* especially before *nd,* but also before other combinations, even when the rimes of the words in which it occurs are spelled with an *e*: *blynde,* TC 4. 648, : *wende* : *sende; blynde,* TC 5. 526, : *wende; synde,* D 1258, : *ende* and so on. On the other hand, *sende,* TC 5. 893, is written with an *e* when riming *wynde.*[18] In Middle Dutch, *e* before *n* and another consonant was raised to *i;* forms "with *e* and *i* occur side by side in the same texts."[19]

The utter confusion of *e*'s and *i*'s in such examples as *abidyn,* TC 2. 935, : *redyn; sete,* A 989; *pete,* A 1761; *presoun,* A 1023; *a twen,* A 3589, : *syn; blysse,* B 1146, : *gesse* : *heuinesse; abedyn,* E 1888, : *glydyn; geuyn,* LGW 1281, : *dryuyn;* and the like, might be explained by assuming that the scribe was a Dutchman, in whose native speech *i* was always lengthened and lowered to *e* in an open syllable, and who was used to such variations of the two characters in spelling.

[18] Carefully executed MSS like El and Hg are much more meticulous about such rimes.

[19] Barnouw, *Beatrijs,* p. 10.

It may further be noted that in unstressed positions Du *bi,* corresponding to ME *by,* appears as *be,* the common, if not the usual, form of the unstressed preposition in Gg.[20] And the occasional writing of *o* for *u* as in *grochit,* A 3045; *pors,* A 656; *skolle,* A 3935; *porge,* B 4137; *wolgaly* for *vulgarly,* TC 4. 1513, might be explained by the fact that in Dutch an unmutated Germanic *u* was lowered to *o.*

The voiced and voiceless sounds represented in Middle English by *th* or *þ* did not exist in Middle Dutch, and a Dutch scribe would have had the same difficulty with them that the Gg scribe had. He might well have heard a strongly voiced [ð] as [d], and in Gg such writings as *whedyr,* TC 3. 929; *displesaunce,* TC 3. 971; *fedele,* A 296; *þedyr,* A 1263; *dedyr,* G 307; *dey,* I 443, are surprisingly frequent. Rimes like *blyþe* : *stryue,* TC 4. 174, 175; *blythe* : *alyue,* A 2697, 2698; *blythe* : *stryue* : *lyue,* PF 604, 606, 607; *aryue* : *blythe,* LGW 1472, 1473; *swythe* : *dryue,* LGW 2176, 2177, would have been easier for a scribe who did not naturally use the sound [ð] than for one who did. The confusion of *th* and *t* in *feyt,* TC 1. 89; *brennyt,* TC 4. 678; *tilke,* A 182, A 1973, A 3004; *tyn,* B 2563, E 1299; *thedeus* in the Latin from the *Thebaid* following TC 5. 1498 (fol. 123ᵛ); *Thil,* A 3422, B 1158, C 509, PF 40; *thasemble,* D 89, could be explained in a similar way.[21]

Three minor points of morphology which might be explained as reflecting the influence of different English dialects may also be explained by the single assumption that the scribe was Dutch. The addition of an *n* to the infinitive to the detriment of rime[22] is to be explained as East Anglian if it has dialectal significance;[23] but the infinitive also ends in *-en* in Dutch. The present participle ending in *-nd*[24] had a wide distribution in Middle English, including the

[20] E.g., A 174, A 279, A 572, A 686, A 1074, A 1111, A 1203, A 1212, A 1291.

[21] *Th* is sometimes written for *t,* especially in the dialect of Holland, though it has "keine lautliche Bedeutung" (Franck, *Mittelniederländische Grammatik,* p. 8).

[22] The certain examples are: *brende* : *dessendyn* : *wende* : *defende,* ABC 90, 92, 93, 95; *hie* : *eyen* : *preyen,* TC 2. 401, 403, 404; *auaylyn* : *travayle* : *fayle,* TC 3. 520, 522, 523; *coldyn* : *tolde* : *helde,* TC 3. 800, 802, 803; *sen* : *sche* : *tre,* B 1052, 1054, 1055; *deyin* : *slogardye,* G 15, 17; *desyryn* : *a fyre* : *esspyre,* TG 434, 436, 437.

[23] See Henry Cecil Wyld, "South-Eastern and South-East Midland Dialects in Middle English," *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association,* VI (1920), 121; *A History of Modern Colloquial English* (London, 1925), p. 341.

[24] Examples are: *rydende,* TC 2. 1249; *rydonde,* TC 2. 1253; *ioynande,* A 1060; *folwende,* A 3260; *wepynd,* D 401; *stynkende,* I 561, I 840; *chydynd,* I 631.

northeastern part of the East Anglian region[25] to which other of the dialectal characteristics of the manuscript point; *-ende* was also the ending of the present participle in Middle Dutch. The tendency to retain the *-n* of the past participle of strong verbs indicated by some rimes[26] may be explained as Northern,[27] but it may also be Dutch. The evidence is slight, and there is little basis for argument. The assumption that the scribe was Dutch would eliminate the mixture of two dialects, but such mixture of Midland and Northern forms was common in East Anglia in the fifteenth century.

The form *ist* for *is*[28] certainly is not normal in English. The normal Middle Dutch form was *es* or *is,* though *ist* did appear in Dutch under German influence.[29]

Twice, in E 989 and F 928, *as* is used for *than* after a comparative. This usage was not unknown in Middle English;[30] but it does not seem to have been common, and it might be explained by the Dutch use of *als* with the meaning "than."

Such correspondences between characteristics of Gg and characteristics of Dutch as have been listed here do not prove that the scribe of Gg was a Dutchman. It would be impossible to prove such a hypothesis in the absence of external evidence unless the text had been practically translated into Dutch, for there is no means of determining to what extent and in what ways the influence of the Dutch language would have made itself felt. Even if comparison with an English manuscript known to have been written by a Dutch scribe were possible, it would be of little value, for two scribes would probably not have behaved in exactly the same way.[31]

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[25] Samuel Moore, Sanford Brown Meech, and Harold Whitehall, "Middle English Dialect Characteristics and Dialect Boundaries: Preliminary Report of an Investigation Based Exclusively on Localized Texts and Documents," *Essays and Studies in English and Comparative Literature,* University of Michigan Publications: Language and Literature, XIII (Ann Arbor, 1935), 17-18, 47.

[26] Examples are: *goddis* : *forbodyn is,* Scogan 15, 17; *I betyn* : *herte* (for *hete*) : *smete* (for *swete*), TC 2. 940, 942, 943; *goddis* : *forbodyn is,* E 2295, 2296; *dronke* : *swonkyn,* H 17, 18; *tho* : *a gon* (rime corrected by underdotting *n*), PF 463, 465.

[27] See Samuel Moore, *Historical Outlines of English Phonology and Morphology* (Ann Arbor, 1929), p. 85.

[28] It occurs at TC 2. 749, TC 2. 1422, TC 3. 321, TC 5. 62, TC 5. 586, A 502 (corrected), A 3703, D 905, D 1007, D 1102, E 337, PF 640. In most cases *is it* is the correct reading, or *it* might have been unconsciously supplied by the scribe.

[29] Franck, *Mittelniederländische Grammatik,* p. 142.

[30] *NED,* s. v. *as,* B.I.4.

[31] The hypothesis would perhaps receive further support if the conjecture that the MS may have been made for Jacqueline of Hainault (Manly and Rickert, *Text,* I, 181) could be proved. Unfortunately, this tantalizing conjecture, brilliantly as it might have been argued, is no more than conjecture

What these correspondences do indicate is that it is possible to explain certain eccentricities of Gg by comparison to the speech habits of a Dutchman. The out-and-out blunders like *hemereste* for *hyndreste,* A 622, could have been made by anyone who did not thoroughly understand the language, even by a careless or unintelligent English scribe, as could the misdivisions and ear-errors. Probably none of the phenomena noted as peculiarities would have been impossible for a careless English scribe. But when word substitutions which can be explained by comparison to words that occur in Dutch, together with orthographic and phonological peculiarities that occur normally in Dutch but only sporadically in English, are found in a carefully executed manuscript that is recognized to be abnormal, such an explanation at least deserves to be considered. (See page 42 for a table of linguistic characteristics showing dialectal and possible Dutch influence.)

III

Though records of the presence of Flemings and Hollanders in England do not seem to be as numerous for the fifteenth century as for the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries,[32] it would certainly have been possible for Gg to be copied by a Dutch-speaking scribe in England—or, for the matter of that, perhaps even in the Netherlands—between 1420 and 1440. Commercial relations between England and the Low Countries were close, especially in the wool trade.[33] Flemish and other alien weavers and artisans were settled in England.[34] And one of the important centers of the English cloth industry was the East Anglian region,[35] the dialect of which is reflected in Gg.

[32] Evidence of the relations between England and the Netherlands has been collected and summarized by J. F. Bense, *The Anglo-Dutch Relations from the Earliest Times to the Death of William the Third . . .* ('s-Gravenhage, 1924).

[33] E. E. Power, in Eileen Power and M. M. Postan, *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1933), chap. ii, "The Wool Trade in the Fifteenth Century," pp. 41, 83, 97.

Sir John Fastolf, book collector and neighbor of the Pastons in Norfolk, "traded largely with the Low Countries" (James E. Thorold Rogers, *The Industrial and Commercial History of England,* ed. Arthur G. L. Rogers [New York, 1892], p. 298).

[34] For an account of the ill-feeling among English weavers because of tax-exemptions enjoyed by alien weavers in London in the first half of the fifteenth century, see E. Lipson, *The Economic History of England,* I (London, 1937), 467-68.

[35] E. Lipson, *The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries* (London, 1921), p. 222.

Characteristic	*Nth*	*WMl*	*EMl*	*Sth*	*Du*
e for OE *ī*	.	.	x	.	.
e for *i* in open syllables	.	.	x	.	.
e and *i* confused in closed syllables	.	.	.	.	x
a for OE *–eah–*	.	.	x	.	.
e for OE *ȳ, y*	.	.	x	.	.
u for OE *ȳ, y*[1]	.	x	.	x	.
o for *u* not next *n, m*[2]	.	.	.	.	x
on– for *un–*[2]	.	.	.	.	x
Intrusive *e* between liquid and following consonant[2]	.	.	.	.	x
sch for *sc, sk*	.	.	.	.	x
Confusion of *th* and *d*[2]	.	.	.	.	x
Confusion of *th* and *t*[2]	.	.	.	.	x
Addition of *–n* to infinitive to detriment of rime	.	.	x	.	x
Present participle in *–nd*	x	.	x	.	x
Voiceless final consonant in ending of past participle of weak verbs	x	.	x	.	.
Addition of *–n* to past participle of strong verbs to detriment of rime	x	.	.	.	x
ist for *is* (*is it?*)	.	.	.	.	x
Substitution of words possibly Dutch	.	.	.	.	x

[1] Restricted in occurrence in MS.
[2] Also occurs in East Anglian texts.

Flemings had not been unknown in England earlier, but it was in the fourteenth century, when they started entering the eastern counties especially,[36] that they assumed economic importance. Edward III encouraged their immigration, granting letters of protection to John Kempe of Flanders in 1331.[37] An act of 1337 promised liberal franchises to foreign clothworkers, and its result was a "large influx of alien weavers, dyers, and fullers," who took up residence in the larger towns, including Norwich.[38] By the time of the uprising in 1381, the Flemings were sufficiently numerous to be singled out as special objects for the attention of bands of rebels in Norfolk and the rest of East Anglia.[39] There is not as much evidence of immigration in the fifteenth century as in the fourteenth,[40] but it is possible that there were Flemish weavers in northeast Norfolk about the middle of the fifteenth century.[41]

The presence of any considerable number of immigrants from the Netherlands, even though those of whom records have been preserved were for the most part weavers, would constitute presumptive evidence that an English manuscript might have been copied by a Dutch-speaking scribe,[42] and the possibility is increased by the fact that Dutch scribes were at work in England copying Latin manuscripts between 1420 and 1445. For example,[43] Manuscript Corpus Christi College, Oxford, CCXLIII, which was given to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, by the Abbot of Saint Albans,[44]

[36] Bense, *Anglo-Dutch Relations,* p. 38.

[37] Lipson, *op. cit.,* p. 12.

[38] *Ibid.,* pp. 12-13. Lipson says elsewhere that not many settled at Norwich under Edward III, but that "many weavers [presumably Flemings] became freemen of the city" in the next reign (*Economic History,* I, 489).

[39] See Edgar Powell, *The Rising in East Anglia in 1381* (Cambridge, 1896), *passim.*

[40] Bense, *op. cit.,* p. 41.

[41] Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants to England,* Social England Series (London, 1897), p. 110.

Thomas Fuller says that when it was proposed to drain the fens in the neighborhood of Cambridge, *ca.* 1436, "they wanted not Dutchmen out of the Low Countries to assist them . . . " (*The History of the University of Cambridge, and of Waltham Abbey. With the Appeal of Injured Innocence,* ed. James Nichols [London, 1840], p. 105).

[42] The activity of alien scribes was officially recognized and was at least not discouraged. See, for example, the fifteenth-century act cited by W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce During the Early and Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1905), I, 431.

[43] I give only the certain cases that I have found. There are in English libraries other fifteenth-century manuscripts written by Netherlanders, but there is no evidence that they were written in England rather than imported. I have little doubt that the list of Dutch scribes in my files could be considerably augmented.

[44] See Henricus O. Coxe, *Catalogus codicum MSS. qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie adservantur* (Oxonii, 1852), II, 100-101.

was written at Oxford in 1423 by Frederick Naghel of Utrecht.[45] In 1432 a scribe named Tielmann, who identified himself as a clerk of the Diocese of Utrecht, copied three works—one in Manuscript Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, 114, and two in Manuscript Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 68—for Walter Crome of Gonville Hall.[46]

The hypothesis that Gg was written by a Dutch-speaking scribe is only a hypothesis—no more. Absolute proof, unless the hand of the Gg scribe could be certainly identified as that of a scribe known to have been Dutch or Flemish, is impossible. Until such further proof is forthcoming, or until a better hypothesis is offered, this may be considered a possible suggestion as to how a Chaucer manuscript in many ways very good came to be in many other ways very bad.

University of Arkansas

[45] As is stated in the colophon (*ibid.*, p. 101). Mr. Manly secured a photostat of this manuscript, but the hands in it and Gg are not the same. It is possible, of course, that Gg is the work of some other Dutch scribe included in my list.

Another scribe, who wrote at Oxford in 1430, would seem from his name, Cornelius Oesterwic, to have been from the Netherlands (see Montague Rhodes James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. A Descriptive Catalogue,* I [Cambridge, 1900], 474).

[46] See Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge,* I (Cambridge, 1907), 121; *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912), I, 146-48. James's suggestion (*A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse* [Cambridge, 1899], p. 220) that this Tielmann and the Tydeman who wrote MS Peterhouse I. 9. 2. may be the same is untenable, for Tydeman signs himself as "de regno suecie" (*ibid.*, p. 219).